What Connections Can Teach Us About Postmortems

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What is Connections?
YESTERDAY
TOMORROW
AND YOU
written and presented by
JAMES BURKE
My History With History
Warmer climate \(\rightarrow\) better conditions for agric.

Feudalism \(\rightarrow\) more polit. stability (FC.41)

Viking, Arab & Magyar raids let up by 1000 C.E.

Cross-plowing \(\rightarrow\) Time to develop new lands

Furrows \(\rightarrow\) Some crops after flood or drought

Need more draught animals \(\rightarrow\) Peasants share plow teams

Heavy plow \(\rightarrow\) Cuts deep rich soils of N. Eur.

More food \(\rightarrow\) More food \(\rightarrow\) More food

Develop new lands \(\rightarrow\) Population growth

Serfs scatter & divide land in strips \(\rightarrow\) All get at least some land plowed in time

Cross-breeding \(\rightarrow\) Larger farm horses

Horseshoe \(\rightarrow\) Hooves don't crack from wet soil

Horse collar \(\rightarrow\) Can pull heavier load from chest

Plow horse works 50% faster & 1-2 more hrs/day

Crop rotation using legumes to replenish nitrogen in the soil

Less soil exhaustion & more varied & balanced diet

3-field system \(\rightarrow\) Plants 2/3 fields \(\rightarrow\) 33% more land farmed

Less fallow to plow 2X/yr \(\rightarrow\) More time to develop new farmland

Less soil exhaustion & more varied & balanced diet

Horse's speed along with 4-wheeled wagon \(\rightarrow\) 2X area can supply food to towns

Able to support revival of towns, trade & kings (FC.64)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>History</th>
<th>Historiography</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The study of who, what, where, how, and why events occurred.</td>
<td>The study of how we study and record these events.</td>
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<tr>
<td>“How did Columbus discover America?”</td>
<td>“Why do we say Columbus ‘discovered’ America despite the fact that there were millions of people living there?”</td>
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History is storytelling.
A postmortem is a story.
Telling the story well is important because a completely logical brain does not exist.
The Problem with Postmortems
Incidents are not linear.
So collect all the data!
...and then shove it all into a template...
...that everyone skims and *never reads again*. 
Collecting this information is important, but if no one reads it, it is only partially successful.
COSMOS

CONNECTIONS
What can Connections teach us?
Surprising Relationships
Zooming In
It’s More Complex Than You Think
A Bit of Song and Dance
Avoiding the Pitfalls
Don’t put the cart before the horse.
Start with events, not reasons.
Real stories don’t fit the three-act narrative.
TL; DR
Make your postmortems more interesting

- **Highlight surprising connections** between systems and events
- **Zoom in on key systems and people** to show how they did what they did
- Write your postmortems from the perspective of the people **living in the moment**
- Provide enough context to show people that the incident is more complex than it appears
- Write your postmortems **so that they are easy to read**
Sources and Inspiration

You can view the entirety of the *Connections* series on the Internet Archive here:

https://archive.org/details/ConnectionsByJamesBurke
Sources and Inspiration

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Sources and Inspiration

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